

Inspection of a good school: Balksbury Junior School

Floral Way, Salisbury Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 3QP

Inspection dates:

22–23 October 2019

Outcome

Balksbury Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who come to Balksbury are very happy. They are confident that staff care about them. This is evident in the warm relationships between staff and pupils. There is a strong sense of community. Parents and carers are able to speak informally to staff if they have any concerns. The majority are very appreciative of the support that staff offer. They recognise that their children enjoy coming to school and have a range of opportunities.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils say that teachers plan lessons that are interesting and they enjoy being challenged to work hard.

Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. The new behaviour strategy and reorganisation of breaktimes have made pupils feel safer and happier in school. They enjoy playtime because it is well organised and they have a wide choice of equipment to play with. Pupils refer to the code of conduct when talking about behaviour. They understand about behaving and treating others as they would want for themselves. Pupils say there is hardly any bullying now, and that when it happens, it is managed well. Pupils say they always have someone they can talk to if they are worried.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to do well. They have put much work into providing a safe and happy environment, where pupils can thrive. The new headteacher has introduced a fresh approach to managing behaviour, which means that pupils are ready to learn. Teaching is purposeful, well organised and at the right level to help pupils to learn. Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to complete the tasks they are set.

Better teaching helps pupils to deepen their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This means they can recall what they have learned easily and build on it over time. Some older pupils do, however, have gaps in their learning from the past. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well, both in class and working individually or in small groups out of class.

Reading is a high priority. Any pupils who are behind when they come into Year 3 spend time every day working with an adult so they soon catch up. Reading is well taught and helps pupils to continue to improve their skills. Pupils understand well what they read. They can draw out implied meaning with skill. All the pupils I spoke to said that they love reading and enjoy the whole-class stories that they choose. They like spending time in the library, selecting books to read in class and at home. However, some pupils lack confidence to read aloud because they do not get enough opportunities to read with an adult.

The wider curriculum is developing well. Teaching in science, history and physical education, for example, is well planned to help pupils build their knowledge and develop their skills over time. In other subjects, such as geography, plans are at an earlier stage. Interesting topics are planned across the four years to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in a logical order. Leaders have not reviewed some subjects, such as French, art and design technology yet, so pupils do not always learn what they need to know before moving on to new ideas.

There is more to the curriculum at Balksbury than subjects. Leaders are committed to developing pupils as well-rounded individuals. Pupils learn what it means to be a good citizen and part of a community. They are encouraged to think about similarities and differences between different cultures and the importance of respect.

Leaders know what the school does well and what could be better. The changes that they have made since January this year are improving the school. Staff feel supported and are enthusiastic about the developments. Subject leaders are keen to improve their subjects. However, some are new to the role and need to develop their skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make safeguarding a priority. All pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately. Staff are well trained to fulfil their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Leaders regularly check staff's understanding of policies and procedures.

Staff record their concerns systematically and leaders responsible for safeguarding ensure that every concern is followed up.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from risks they may encounter in their lives. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils received a very useful talk on fire safety. Pupils also learn about being safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are coherently planned and sequenced. Others, such as French, art and design technology, require further development. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they have already set about planning next year's curriculum. They have also made preparations to train staff in how to deliver the new curriculum.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects. However, their leadership skills are still developing, so much falls to senior leaders at present. The planned work that senior leaders and advisers from the local authority are due to implement is essential for subject leaders to be able to monitor and further improve the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	115852
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10111355
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Pagett
Headteacher	Katy Thompson
Website	www.balksburyjuniors.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Balksbury Infant School under one governing body and an executive headteacher.
- The current executive headteacher joined the school in an interim role in January 2019 and took up the permanent post in April 2019.
- The deputy headteacher of the junior school is currently absent. The deputy headteacher of the infant school is carrying out this role.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons, often with senior leaders. She met with the executive headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, a group of governor (including the chair), the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, several groups of children from all year groups, and the local authority adviser who works with the school.
- During this inspection, reading, mathematics and geography were looked at in detail. This included meeting leaders with responsibility for these subjects, visiting lessons, talking to teachers and pupils about the lessons, and looking at work in pupils' books.

- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. She also took account of the 327 pupil survey replies, as well as 25 staff questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Louise Adams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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